STORMWATCH: TEAM ACHILLES #4

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STORMWATCH: TEAM ACHILLES
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Written by Micah Ian Wright
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PAGE 1

PANEL ONE

Widescreen. CLOSEUP on a fresh faced young man, AVI BARAK. He stands in the lobby of the United Nations tower. In the background, construction crews work hanging a huge metal UN symbol over a receptionist desk. The 21-year-old Avi watches, curious.

COLEMAN (O.S.)
You Barak?

PANEL TWO

Barak turns around, hand extended out to shake hands. Coleman stands in front of him, hands on his hips. Coleman is dressed in black military BDUs with a BLUE Beret on his head. Put the Stormwatch badge flash on his beret. This is their duty uniform when they’re not in the field. Blue is the official color of all UN forces (they’re called Smurfs because of it).

BARAK
That’s me. Avi Barak, Stormwatch Reservist #228-Charlie. Codename: Seeker.

COLEMAN
Blake Coleman, Stormwatch Field Team Leader. I ain’t got no codename.

COLEMAN
We ditched the codenames when we threw out the spandex.

PANEL THREE

Inset panel. Barak’s hand extended. Coleman’s hands on hips. No reciprocal handshake.

PANEL FOUR

Coleman walks away. Barak stands there, hand out, unsure of what to do.

COLEMAN
Let’s go. Colonel Santini doesn’t like to be kept waiting.

PANEL FIVE

Inset panel, closeup on Barak, irked at Coleman’s impoliteness.

BARAK

Yeah. Nice to meet you, too.

PAGE 2 **2**

PANEL ONE

Coleman walks down the hallway. Barak runs after him. Workmen are painting the hallway.

BARAK
Those terrorists really did a number on the building, huh? How'd that come out? The FBI threw a news blanket over the entire thing.

COLEMAN (OVER HIS SHOULDER)
We took care of business. The rest is classified.

BARAK
You killed four, two of them escaped and you captured one? No shit!

PANEL TWO

Barak and Coleman in front of an elevator. The doors are opening. Coleman looks PISSED! He stares down into Barak's face. Barak is smug, pleased with himself.

SOUND EFX
DING

COLEMAN
You do that again and I'll cut one of your ears off.

BARAK
Just showing you the goods, Coleman. You've got a real "Fuck you, new guy" attitude going. Wanted to break that up.

COLEMAN
Just watch yourself or I'll break your face.

PANEL THREE

Barak and Coleman enter the elevator.

BARAK
We meeting the Weatherman on the Orbital Station?

COLEMAN
You been on that reservist list too long. There's not going to be another Orbital Sation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARAK

No Way! The UN’s not buying us a new station?

PAGE 3 **3**

PANEL ONE

Coleman and Barak inside the elevator. The doors are closing.

COLEMAN
UN doesn’t have the funding. Our new Operational HQ is in the sub-basement.

PANEL TWO

Coleman’s hand slides his Stormwatch fetish into a slot on the elevator button panel. The elevator buttons at the bottom of the button panel read “3 2 1 P1 P2 P3 B SW” The SW button is lit up.

PANEL THREE

Widescreen panel. Closeup on Coleman and Barak in the elevator. Coleman in the extreme foreground at the front of the elevator. Behind him, in the background, Barak smiles, like he’s got a secret joke going. Coleman is stone faced, staring straight ahead at the elevator doors.

BARAK
So how many of the terrorists did you kill? Personally, I mean.

COLEMAN
Stop screwing around or we’re going to be late for Colonel Santini?

BARAK
None, huh? That’s gotta be embarassing.

PANEL FOUR

Same exact shot, only now Coleman has a really pissed-off look on his face; teeth gritted, lips pulled back, eyes buggin’, but he hasn’t turned around yet.

BARAK
So what have you been doing with the terrorist you captured?

COLEMAN
Boy, what did I tell you about that shit?

PAGE 4 **4**

PANEL ONE

Establishing shot of Benito Santini's office. There are huge stacks of papers and files all over his desk. SANTINI sits behind the desk in his "office blacks" Stormwatch uniform, reading a report. Quiet shot, sedate. The office door is closed.

PANEL TWO

Mood spoiled. Comedy! The office door has slammed wide open. Standing in the doorway is Barak, his right hand over his right ear, blood streaming from between his fingers. Behind him in the doorway stands Blake Coleman. Smiling.

BARAK
This fucking psycho just cut my fucking ear off!

PANEL THREE

Santini is up, crossing over to Barak. Barak is anguished, pained, hand over his ear, blood between the fingers.

SANTINI
What is this bullshit?

BARAK
What? You... I... My EAR!

SANTINI
Is that the way you report to your superior at a new duty station?

PANEL FOUR

Widescreen. Close-up two-shot on Barak with Santini in his face. Barak is at full attention, saluting. Santini smiles. Barak's ear is there, by the way, his earlobe sliced in two from the tip to the cartilage.

BARAK
Lt. Avi Barak, Israeli Self Defense Forces, seconded to United Nations Stormwatch, reporting for duty, ***SIR!***

SANTINI
That's better, Lieutenant. Now, knowing who you are, what you can do, and who just cut your ear in half, I'm guessing that you were doing something you were warned not to do.

BARAK
I thought he was joking. Sir.

PAGE 5 **5**

PANEL ONE

Two-Shot. Barak stiff at attention, still saluting. His shoulder is covered with blood dripping from his ear. Santini looks deadly serious.

SANTINI
We take operational security very seriously around here, Lieutenant.

SANTINI
I hereby order you not to ask anyone in this unit any questions until I rescind this order. Is that understood?

BARAK
Yes sir, no questions, sir.

PANEL TWO

Santini dismissing him.

SANTINI
Good. Now go see the nurse and get your boo-boo taken care of.

SANTINI
I need you back here in exactly thirty minutes.

BARAK
Yes sir. Thirty minutes, sir.

PANEL THREE

Outside Santini's office. Coleman stands in the hallway, Barak closes the door as he exits. His hand is over his ear again. He eyes Coleman suspiciously.

BARAK
I hope this fucking Doctor is nearby.

COLEMAN
For a guy from Israel, your English is pretty good. Especially your swearing.

PANEL FOUR

Medium shot. Barak and Coleman walk down the hallway together, passing the closed and locked Armory doors.

CONTINUED:

BARAK
I grew up Orange County, California, man. My Dad moved us to Israel when I was sixteen. Back to our origins and all that shit.

COLEMAN
Yeah. I remember thinking that after I first saw “Roots.” Then I served four months in Uganda with the Black Razors.

COLEMAN
Squeezed all that back-to-the-Motherland bullshit right out of me.

PAGE 6 **6**

PANEL ONE

Coleman opens a door a few inches, looking in. We CANNOT SEE IN! A plaque on the door reads “DR. GRUNIER”.

COLEMAN
Doctor Grunier? You busy?

GRUNIER (O.S.)
Yes. Would you please return in twenty minutes?

BARAK
Twenty Minutes? Fuck that!

PANEL TWO

New angle. Over Barak’s shoulder as he shoves his way into the Doctor’s office. DR. YVONNE GRUNIER stands there. In her mid-30s, she is an unusual looking woman, flat-chested, intelligent looking, thin, square thick black rimmed glasses rest on her nose.

Behind the doctor, a large floor-to-ceiling internal imaging machine stands near a wall in a medical room. It looks like an ER in here, there’s so much machinery.

The Imaging Machine shows a stripped-away version of a human man. It’s not an x-ray machine, but the super-duper version of that... Like an MRI but in full color. There’s no skin on the man and part of the body scan has been focused down to the bone, showing massive metal rings inserted directly into the shoulder hip and ankle bones. The rest of the muscles look deformed or damaged.

GRUNIER
Get the Hell out of my office!

BARAK
I’ve bleeding to death here, lady! I’ve been fucking mutilated here!

PANEL THREE

Jukko steps out from behind the body scanner, totally naked. He’s the guy with the bone rings on the scanner. His entire body is covered with freakish scars, punctures, etc.

GRUNIER
Lieutenant Hämäläinen! Please get back on the scanning platform.

JUKKO
No, no... I can wait.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PANEL FOUR

Wide c/u on Jukko. Smiling that evil scarred smile of his.

JUKKO
I wouldn’t want the poor boy to be mutilated
for life or anything.

PAGE 7 **7**

PANEL ONE

Widescreen. Jukko and Barak face to face. Barak is really freaked out.

BARAK
What... What the Hell happened to you?

JUKKO
I cut myself shaving.

BARAK
No, that’s not it, you-

PANEL TWO

Wide. On Barak. His eyes roll up into his head. Blood shoots from his nose onto his shirt. He starts to collapse forward. Jukko is confused.

BARAK
Gughkk!

JUKKO
Perkele!

PANEL THREE

Barak on the floor. Twitching. Having an epileptic seizure. Doctor Grunier above him, hypodermic needle in hand, trying to poke him. Jukko and Coleman watch, concerned.

JUKKO
What happened? I didn’t touch him!

COLEMAN
He’s an inductive telepath. He asked a question. You lied. He instantly saw the truth.

JUKKO
Vittujen kevät! All at once? The poor bastard!

PANEL FOUR

Grunier sticks Barak deep in the neck with the needle. GROSS!

GRUNIER
Why wasn’t I told that a telepath was being brought onto the team?

PAGE 8 **8**

PANEL ONE

In Santini's office (later, but continuing the same conversation). On Santini sitting behind his desk. Not happy.

SANTINI
Because he's not part of the field team, that's why, Doctor.

SANTINI
He's my administrative aide. My coffee boy.

SANTINI
And if anyone outside of this team learns that sport here is a telepath, I'm going to hand you your walking papers.

PANEL TWO

Grunier stands over Santini's desk. Pissed. Behind her stand Jukko (in clothes), Coleman and a sheepish looking Barak, ear bandaged, nose taped, band-aid over where he received his neck injection.

GRUNIER
I... No, *we all* should have been briefed! Look at what has already happened!

BARAK
Hey, it was no big deal, really.

GRUNIER
Be silent. Santini, absorbing Jukko's level of trauma in one siphon would have killed a level six telepath.

PANEL THREE

Widescreen. Santini stands, leaning over his desk, staring at Grunier.

SANTINI
Then it's a lucky thing that the kid's higher than a level five, isn't it?

SANTINI
Otherwise you'd be scraping Junior's brains off your lab floor.

SANTINI
I'll be briefing everyone later today, okay, Doctor? Now, everyone out of my office.

PAGE 9 **9**

PANEL ONE

Wide. Angle from behind Santini. The group files out of the office, Barak last in line. Santini beckons with one crooked finger at Barak.

SANTINI
Not you, Barak. You stay.

PANEL TWO

Widescreen. 2-shot. Barak contrite. Santini grim, arms crossed, leaning back against his desk.

BARAK
I'm sorry, Colonel Santini. I didn't mean to ask any questions... It just popped out.

SANTINI
You disobeyed a direct order. Now you know what happens.

BARAK
Understood, sir. It won't happen again.

PANEL THREE

Widescreen. Santini puts his hand on the kid's shoulder. Raises a warning forefinger with his other hand.

SANTINI
It was an understandable mistake. You're just lucky that it wasn't fatal.

BARAK
Yeah, about that... why did-

SANTINI
No questions. Word it as a statement.

PANEL FOUR

Widescreen. Two-shot, medium c/u on Barak & Santini. Barak questioning with his face... Eyebrows raised, shoulders shrugged forward, etc.

BARAK
Dr. Grunier said that anything lower than a level six would have been killed when they probed Jukko.

CONTINUED:

BARAK
The IDF doctors said I was a level eight telepath. I should be dead right now because no way am I a level five or higher.

SANTINI
Actually, you are, but you’re only partially activated.

PAGE 10 **10**

PANEL ONE

Widescreen, half page panel... gonna be lots of text here.

On Santini, panel right in the background, lecturing, the back of Barak's head in the extreme foreground left. (we're answering questions for the new reader here, and since Barak is the stand-in for the curious reader in this issue, well there you go, Santini's talking to us.)

BARAK
I don't understand.

SANTINI
Barak, there are four known causes of Super Powered Beings. One: The Comet Effect. Weird rock flies past the earth and genetically alters innocent people into superpowered freaks.

SANTINI
Two: Alien Intervention. Bug-eyed monsters mate with our luscious human women, producing superpowered freaks.

SANTINI
Three: Surgical Alteration. Asshole scientists experiment on people and augment them into superpowered freaks.

SANTINI
Four: Humans in adverse conditions evolve into superpowered freaks to cope with their new habitat. Notice a through-line?

PANEL TWO

Quarter page tall, full wide. C/U on Barak. Angry look on his face.

BARAK
You think we're all freaks.

PANEL THREE

Quarter page tall, full page wide. C/U on Santini. Big smile.

SANTINI
Sure. But beyond that, all of these root causes have one thing in common: interference with the normal state of affairs.

PAGE 11 **11**

PANEL ONE

Wide. Quarter page tall. Santini stands and walks towards a small sink in his office.

SANTINI
I formed this new Stormwatch to prevent that interference, and to police those who have already been altered.

SANTINI
Sometimes to accomplish those goals, I need to interfere myself.

PANEL TWO

Wide. Quarter page tall, full page wide. Santini.

SANTINI
Avi, you’re a partially activated comet seedling. You need a push to get to the next stage.

SANTINI
There have only ever been three people with the power to activate latent powers.

SANTINI
The first is dead, the second disappeared to another dimension, and the third... well, he’s underground somewhere in the Middle East.

PANEL THREE

Wide. Quarter page tall. Barak gets it.

BARAK
Dhul Fiqar. The Sword of the Prophet.

SANTINI
The jag-off who activated those idiots who attacked us here at the UN three months ago.

BARAK
And 16 other super-terrorists who have popped up in the last year in and around Israel.

PANEL FOUR

Wide. Quarter page tall. Barak mulls over what Santini is saying. He should look pensive, concerned... Conflicted between duty and will to live.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SANTINI

I need your help to find him and the bitch who hired him to kill us. To do that, I need you fully activated.

SANTINI

And full activation just might kill you.

PAGE 12 **12**

PANEL ONE

Widescreen. On Barak. Steels himself. This is the first time he doesn't look like a boy. In fact, he looks like an old, old man, especially around the eyes. Haunted.

BARAK
This guy? Dhul Fiqar? I've run into his workmanship before.

BARAK
He activated this one seedling... fucker had the power to explode himself. Again and again and again.

PANEL TWO

Push in closer on Barak. Getting angry, eyes are far away.

BARAK
We couldn't catch him. Couldn't spot him. Couldn't screen for him. Dogs couldn't sniff him. No explosives, see?

BARAK
Shit, man, we didn't even know what he looked like.

PANEL THREE

Closer. Eyes watery, really angry.

BARAK
Piece of shit murdered 238 people. He hit eight schools, four preschools, five arcades, even a children's hospital. All by himself.

BARAK
Who needs a goddamned Martyrs *Brigade* when you got a One Man Martyr Corps?

PANEL FOUR

Crying. Angry crying, though.

BARAK
It took me 19 weeks to find him. He killed 97 children in that time.

BARAK
CHILDREN! The deliberate murder of innocent children! And I couldn't stop him fast enough. You know why?

PAGE 13 **13**

Pages 12 & 13 are Barak’s flashback... Maybe we should mute the colors or wash them out or something to distinguish this section from the rest of the current-day story.

PANEL ONE

Widescreen panel, quarter-page high. Flashback shot. Israel. Hot. Desert. Outside. City street. Barak faces camera, wearing an Israeli military uniform, pulling a .32 long-barrel revolver out of his holster with his right hand, a horrified look on his face. To his left is another military guy, flipping through a file folder full of photos.

BARAK (CAPTION)
I failed because I couldn’t get my mind around the idea that the only terrorist who could penetrate security at all those locations...

PANEL TWO

Widescreen panel, quarter-page high. Barak’s POV. A line of kids in little school uniforms (black shorts, white shirts, black ties) getting onto a schoolbus. Let’s see if we can find the Hebrew spelling for “Schoolbus” and put that on the side. All of the kids in the line are goofing off, none of them concerned with school... but right in the middle of the line is one kid staring straight ahead at the bus. We’re about 20-30 feet away from these kids.

BARAK (CAPTION)
...was a six year old kid.

PANEL THREE

Back on Barak & his partner. Barak points his revolver at us with his right hand, a horrified look on his face. With his left hand, he fights off his partner, hand on the guy’s face... The guy is reaching for Barak’s gun... The inference being that the other guy doesn’t know why Barak’s about to shoot this little kid, that he thinks Barak has gone crazy.

Panels 4,5 & 6 on one row.

PANEL FOUR

Small. The terrorist kid’s face. Staring right at us. Happy! Not sinister or “evil” looking. Just a normal six-year-old kid.

PANEL FIVE

Small. Barak’s pistol. The muzzle fires right at camera. NO SFX.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PANEL SIX

Small. The kid’s head tipped back from the force of the bullet going through his head. A small entrance wound in his forehead. Mouth open, he’s dead, dead, dead.

BARAK (CAPTION)
I shot him, thinking that maybe he wouldn’t explode if he was already dead.

PANEL SEVEN

Widescreen panel, quarter-page high. Back to the wide shot in Panel #2... Scant nanoseconds after the kid was shot. His body teeters backwards (not off the ground or anything silly and Hollywood like that, just off balance and falling backwards, knees crumpling. A bright blue light emanates from within the dead kid. A blast wave moves from inside his body, like he’s a living atomic bomb (which he is), incinerating the kids right next to him, skeletonizing the ones a few feet away, the ones inside the bus are fine for the next three seconds or so. They stare in horror at the fate they’re about to suffer.

BARAK (CAPTION)
I was wrong.

PAGE 14 **14**

PANEL ONE

Same widescreen shot as Page 12, PANEL ONE. On Barak & his partner. The blue blast wave from the kid has hit them full in the chest. They’re off their feet and flying backwards through the air. Barak and his partner are entangled since they were fighting for the gun when the explosion hit them (important later).

BARAK (CAPTION)
My partner hadn’t believed me about the kid. He’d tried to stop me.

PANEL TWO

Widescreen. Barak hits a side of a white-panel bread delivery truck right next to a cute cartoon-smiling-Raccoon-holding-bread-logo on the truck. He hits HARD! Bits of metal, rocks and concrete impacting all around and into him.

PANEL THREE

Widescreen. Barak’s POV. Smoke everywhere. The Schoolbus is a hollowed-out shell. The ground has been baked into glass due to the intense heat of the explosion. Everyone in the panel is dead... they are either dust or smoldering skeletons.

BARAK (CAPTION)
He thought we might have taken the kid alive. I don’t know. Maybe. I doubt it. We’d never know now, would we?

PANEL FOUR

Half-page wide. Barak, despairing, tears streaming down his cheeks, his pistol barrel up against his temple... We can’t see the butt of the gun or his hand, only his arm going off panel and the barrel coming back in pointed at his head.

BARAK (CAPTION)
I’d just killed thirty-nine people... I figured, hey, what’s one more?

PANEL FIVE

Half-page wide. Same shot, new angle. Barak’s partner’s severed and burnt hand is wrapped around Barak’s gun, his finger jammed between the firing pin and the bullet. END OF THE FLASHBACK.

BARAK (CAPTION)
My partner managed to stop me that time.

PAGE 15 **15**

PANEL ONE

Widescreen on Barak. Tears streaming down his cheeks. SHATTERED! Grim. Horrible. Thousand yard stare.

BARAK
So, yeah, if fully activating me means we might be able to find Dhul Fiqar...

BARAK
You go ahead and maybe kill me.

PANEL TWO

Santini & Barak. Silence.

NO DIALOG

PANEL THREE

Santini & Barak.

SANTINI
I don’t like using SPBs, even ones which have passed my psych profiles. Too many unexplored variables.

BARAK
I’d like to know why you feel that way.

PANEL FOUR

Santini points his finger into Barak’s chest.

SANTINI
SPBs tend to band together and defend their own. Every prior Stormwatch team has been disrupted by Superhuman Alpha Male bullshit.

SANTINI
That’s not going to happen here. This is MY team. You cross me, you’re taking a dirt nap six feet from the rest of your life. Understood?

BARAK
Yessir.

PANEL FIVE

Santini and Barak by the sink. Barak shrugs: “I’m cool” type of thing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SANTINI
You understand that you are not going to be part of the field unit?

BARAK
I don’t need to get my hands wet. You tell me he’s dead, that’s good enough for me.

SANTINI
I’ll bring you polaroids. You can put them in your Holiday cards.

PAGE 16 **16**

PANELS ONE, TWO & THREE ON ONE ROW.

PANEL ONE

Santini hands Barak a piece of paper. Barak looks at the paper.

SANTINI
Look in the mirror and read this aloud to yourself. Then answer appropriately.

BARAK
It doesn’t work this way.

SANTINI
Barak, I don’t give a good goddamn what you think will work. Read it.

PANEL TWO

Small. Barak stares at himself in the mirror.

BARAK
Okay, Is your name Avi Barak? Yes.

PANEL THREE

Small. Barak looks back at Santini.

BARAK
This is so fucking stupid.

SANTINI
Indulge me. That’s an order.

PANELS FOUR, FIVE & SIX ON ONE ROW.

PANEL FOUR

Small. Barak stares at himself in the mirror.

BARAK
Did you drink turpentine when you were three years old? No.

SANTINI (O.S.)
Keep reading.

BARAK
Do you remember visiting your aunt’s house in Anaheim? Yes. What did your aunt have in the back of the house? Easels, canvases... painting stuff.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PANEL FIVE

Small. Closer on Barak face to face with himself in the mirror. He's stone flat faced. Bored by this stupid exercise.

BARAK
Do you remember going into her back room alone? No.

PANEL SIX

Barak. Confused.

BARAK
Oh, shit... wait, yes, yeah, I do remember that! Weird!

SANTINI
Keep reading.

BARAK
What did you do in that room? Hey, freaky, I remember it like it was yesterday! I played with my aunt's paint and painted on her walls and picked up a metal can and...

PANEL SEVEN

Full widescreen. Barak violently throws up all over the front of his shirt.

BARAK
Hwooorchuhuh!

PANEL EIGHT

Full widescreen. Barak looks up at Santini, bewildered, still holding his . Santini is Smirking.

SANTINI
Did you remember drinking turpentine when you were four years old? No. Well, you sure as Hell do now.

SANTINI
Now turn the page over and finish the job.

PAGE 17 **17**

PANEL ONE

Outside in the hallway, Coleman walks towards Santini’s door.

PANEL TWO

Just before he gets to the door, it EXPLODES off its hinges, impacting the wall on the other side of the hallway. Crackling lightning fills the corridor.

PANEL THREE

Coleman, handgun ready, charges into Santini’s office. Santini is up against the wall on the floor, thrown there by the explosion. Barak is lying on the floor, unconscious, electricity arcing out of his body into the lamps, computers... anything metal.

COLEMAN
What was that?

SANTINI
An unexplored variable.

SANTINI
The kid went full-throttle. Soon as he wakes up, we’ll go interrogate our guest.

PAGE 18 **18**

PANEL ONE

Santini, Barak & Coleman walk down a darkened underground hallway. Steam pipes and electrical cables are strung along the walls. By this time, Barak's pretty jacked up looking: he's got the bandage on his neck from the injection, his shirt has dried vomit on it, his ear is bandaged and now he's got electrical scorch marks around his nose, eyes and ears.

SANTINI
How's your head, kid?

BARAK
Feels like someone hit me with a bag of hammers.

BARAK
This has been a real banner day for me getting the crap knocked out of me.

PANEL TWO

The three men arrive at a row of solid steel doors set into the concrete passageway. (a sign on the wall declares this as the Stormwatch Temporary Holding Cells) All of the doors (except one) are open, showing the HUGE bank-vault like locking bolts which keep these monster doors shut.

SANTINI
This is where we keep our *guests* until we have the time to bring them to DEEPCORE, our long-term detention facility.

SANTINI
Coleman? Let's open this door up.

PANEL THREE

Pull back. In the foreground, Coleman presses a button on a guard's console. The door in front of Santini and Barak is swinging open.

SANTINI
(speaking to person in cell we can't see)
Good Morning, Sunshine! You decent in there?

PANEL FOUR

From the doorway, a view of the metal prison cell. Inside the 6x6 cell, Hamat stands against the opposite wall, wrapped in a metal cocoon which keeps him from moving. Bound like a mummy, the shape of his arms crossed over his chest are visible beneath the metal coils. Separate metal brackets around his waist, knees and chest force him to stand.

CONTINUED:

Snaking out from the wall behind him are two hoses, one up near his mouth for food gel and the other coming out of his lower half for excreted waste. Talk about Hard Prison Time!

HAMAT
I have nothing to say to you, filth. You hold me illegally. Your American laws say I am to have a lawyer.

SANTINI
Sorry, Hamat old buddy, but you're not in America right now. The United Nations building and grounds are technically foreign soil.

SANTINI
Even worse for you, Stormwatch is not affiliated with the United States justice system.

PANEL FIVE

Thin widescreen panel. Two-shot: Santini, a few feet from Hamat.

SANTINI
The only legal right you have here is to play nice and answer our questions.

HAMAT
Never.

SANTINI
We'll see. Barak? He's all yours. Come get me when you're done.

PAGE 19 **19**

PANEL ONE

In the hallway. Santini and Coleman play poker at a guard desk. In the background, the open cell door looms at the far edge of the panel. A pile of paper money sits between them. Coleman is laying down his hand... the aces of clubs and spades and both black eights (clubs and spades). His fifth card is the 2 of spades.

COLEMAN
Two pair, Aces and Eights.

SANTINI
Dead Man’s Hand.

COLEMAN
What’s that?

SANTINI
It’s what Wild Bill Hickok was holding in his hand when he was shot in the back of the head. It’s bad luck.

COLEMAN
Not unless you can beat it!

PANEL TWO

Santini lays down 2,3,4,5,6 of Hearts. Scoops up the pot with his other hand. Coleman is pissed.

SANTINI
Straight flush to the six. That makes, what, $260? Keep this up, you’ll be signing over your next paycheck.

COLEMAN
Why can I never beat you at Poker?

SANTINI
Because I never blink and I love to bluff.

PANEL THREE

Barak exits the cell, walking towards Santini & Coleman.

BARAK
He gave it all up. He thought he was shielded against guys like me... And if I hadn’t upgraded this morning, he probably would’ve been.

SANTINI
(still smiling after winning Coleman’s money)
So where are his buddies hiding?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARAK

Tibet.

PANEL FOUR

Santini and Coleman's moods turn sour. Angry looks on their faces. Barak is next to them now and mystified why they're so upset.

COLEMAN

Well ain't THAT a motherfucker.

SANTINI

Tibet. Why'd it have to be Tibet? You and your goddamn Dead Man's Hand, Coleman.

BARAK

What? What's wrong with Tibet?

SANTINI

Tibet is... Protected.

BARAK

Protected? By who?

PAGE 20 **20**

PANEL ONE

Widescreen establishing shot. Conference room. THE MIDNIGHTER and JACK HAWKSMOOR are seated on the left side of a big round table. Santini and Jukko on the other side. Behind them, sitting in a corner, is Barak, head down, taking notes.

MIDNIGHTER
You want to WHAT?

SANTINI
Hawksmoor, all I'm asking you people to do is look the other way for an hour.

MIDNIGHTER
So you can murder people.

SANTINI
Not people. Superpowered terrorists who have indisputably murdered several people and will definitely do so again in the near future.

PANEL TWO

Half page wide. Midnighter and Hawksmoor on the left side of the panel, staring towards Santini and Barak (who are offpanel right)

MIDNIGHTER
What part of "No." did you not understand?

HAWKSMOOR
Midnighter is right. The Authority has sworn to protect Tibet's national sovereignty. That means WE police them, no one else.

HAWKSMOOR
Not the United Nations, and especially not Stormwatch.

PANEL THREE

Half page wide. Santini and Barak looking left at the off-panel Authority guys.

SANTINI
First off, you're doing a really shitty job of patrolling Tibet if you've let a group of radical terrorists set up shop there.

SANTINI
Secondly, I didn't call you here to ASK your permission. I was being polite and INFORMING you of our intentions.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SANTINI
You’re what, 6 people? In this uniform, I represent 6 Billion people. You do the math.

PANEL FOUR

Midnighter leaning across the table, getting upset. Hawksmoor is calm, fingers together in an executive “finger steeple”.

MIDNIGHTER
Yeah? Well fifty million Elvis fans *WERE* wrong, and six billion people can be wrong also.

HAWKSMOOR
Especially when it’s really only six trillionaires pulling the strings.

HAWKSMOOR
You and your corporate overlords no more represent the people of the world’s countries than I represent the newest trends in footwear.

PANEL FIVE

Santini. Smiling.

SANTINI
Hey, you think some shadowy council of six trillionaires are secretly running the United Nations, why don’t you try and find them?

SANTINI
Me? I believe that an informed citizenry and a free ballot change more for Humanity every day than any group of spandex-and-leather-pantsed super*zeroes* ever could.

PAGE 21 **21**

PANEL ONE

Widescreen on Santini. Not smiling anymore.

SANTINI
So unless you want to bring me the heads of the superpowered terrorists who are hiding behind your skirts in Tibet...

SANTINI
Then you had better get ready for my team to go into your private game preserve and bring out the big trophies.

PANEL TWO

Half page wide. On Midnighter. Grim.

MIDNIGHTER
You try that and I'll snap your neck like a Twix bar.

PANEL THREE

Half page wide. On Jukko. Grim.

JUKKO
You're a guest here, freak. You keep a civil tongue in your head or you'll wake up dead.

PANEL FOUR

Half page wide. On Midnighter. Evil grin.

MIDNIGHTER
Let's see what you've got. I guarantee it's not enough.

MIDNIGHTER
After all... you're only human.

PANEL FIVE

Half page wide. On Jukko. Evil grin. These two sickos are made for one another.

JUKKO
You are an admirable collection of software and mechanical enhancements.

JUKKO
Of course, the problem with software is that there are always bugs in it.

CONTINUED:

JUKKO
I've killed worse than you. I'm from Finland.

PANEL SIX

2/3 page wide. Widescreen Hawksmoor and Midnighter. Both shocked. A golden Authority "DOOR" is open behind them.

HAWKSMOOR
Christ, Santini? A Finn?

MIDNIGHTER
(to Hawksmoor)
I told you it was a mistake coming here. They want us all dead.

HAWKSMOOR
Last warning, Santini. Keep Stormwatch out of Tibet. We'll be watching you.

PANEL SEVEN

Small, 1/3 page wide. Midnighter & Hawksmoor walk through the door, side by side.

SANTINI (INTO RADIO)
Tefibi? They've gone. You get what you needed?

PAGE 22 **22**

PANEL ONE

Small. Downstairs, Stormwatch HQ. KHALID TEFIBI speaks into ear-mounted radio mouthpiece.

TEFIBI (INTO RADIO)
Yessir, Colonel Santini.

PANEL TWO

2/3 panel wide. Over Khalid's shoulder, we see a view of his computer's screen. A cutaway schematic of the Authority's Swiftship is laid out before us.

TEFIBI (INTO RADIO)
The entire time they were in the building, their built-in radio transponders opened a clear path for me into their computer systems.

PANEL THREE

Widescreen. On Tefibi. Happy.

TEFIBI
We got everything we wanted and then some. They'll never even know we were there.

TEFIBI
Even better, I can get back in anytime I want.

TEFIBI
Fucking Amateurs.

PANEL FOUR

Upstairs in the conference room. Santini into his radio.

SANTINI (INTO RADIO)
Good. Put out a notice... I want everyone here at 1700 hours for a briefing.

PANEL FIVE

Close on Santini.

SANTINI
We're going hunting in Tibet.

THE EVER-LOVING END,
BABY!

25 REFERENCE FOR THIS ISSUE: 25

ISRAELI ARMY UNIFORMS:
http://www.mr-t.co.il/catalog1.html

THE UNITED NATIONS:

Online Virtual Tour of the UN:
http://www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/untour/index.html

Here’s a 360-degree Panoramic Quicktime of the Security Council chamber: http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/untour/subsec.htm